

# TTIS NEWS

A vibrant, colorful illustration featuring a large, glowing lightbulb at the center. The lightbulb is surrounded by various symbols of innovation and technology, including a robot, gears, a cloud, a pencil, a rocket, a DNA helix, a book, a red apple, musical notes, a snail, a WWW logo, a hand holding money, a telephone, and a globe. The background is a dark blue space with stars and comets.

# Empowering agro-processors and emerging farmers





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**Dr. Janine Chantson**

Chief Director: Technology Transfer and Innovation Support

### Beyond STEM: The Power of SHAPE Commercialisation

In today's rapidly evolving world, innovation is no longer the preeminent domain of the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. The social sciences, humanities, and arts – collectively known as SHAPE (Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts for People and the Economy) – play a crucial role in shaping industries, policies, and societal well-being.

At NWU's Technology Transfer and Innovation Support Office, I've seen an increasing number of researchers approach us with SHAPE innovations that not only solve local problems using local knowledge, but also have the potential for wider, real-world application and impact. Examples include:

- The study of international trade data, which has resulted in the creation of an analytical tool to help businesses identify export opportunities more effectively.
- From the Psychology Department, an educational programme to teach mathematics to young learners through a combination of play-based learning, neuropsychology and storytelling.
- A philosophy researcher's work on academic integrity, which has led to the development of a platform for reporting and tracking instances where such policies may have been violated.
- A financial literacy survival toolkit to equip owners of small and micro enterprises with the knowledge and understanding of financial concepts needed to run their companies more effectively.

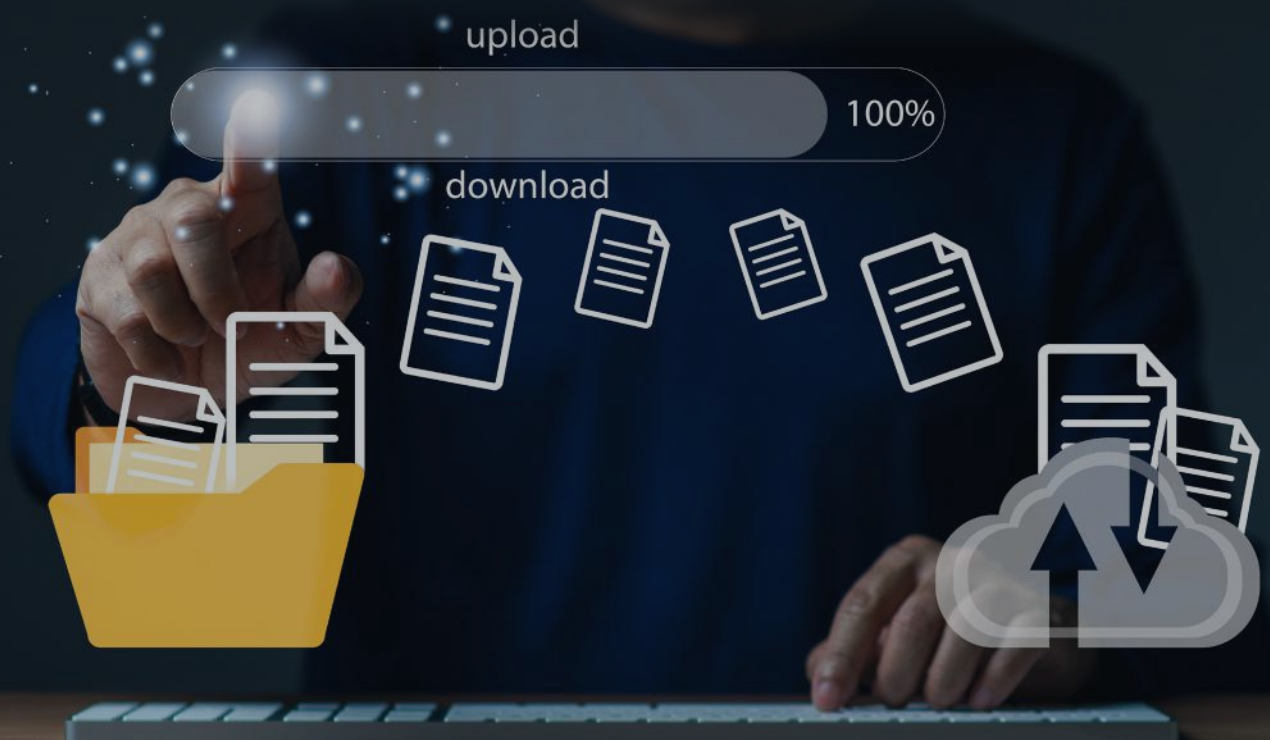
- Fun board games that provide educational experiences in (1) problem-solving to address the sustainable development goals (SDGs), (2) the wheeling and dealing in the business world, (3) the history of World War II, (4) academic referencing and citing, (5) work-readiness.
- Software that can provide students with detailed, personalised audio feedback (with low bandwidth) on their assignments or tests.

Some of these innovations have been licensed to external companies so that they reach a broader audience beyond academia. In other words, dare I say it, they have been “commercialised”. All too often, commercialisation has been viewed with suspicion in the humanities and social sciences. However, this need no longer be the case. In fact, commercialisation is defined as the “process by which any intellectual property emanating from publicly financed research and development is or may be adapted or used for any purpose that may provide any benefit to society [my emphasis added] or commercial use on reasonable terms” in the Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act, 2008 (Act No. 51 of 2008). Therefore, the humanities and social sciences should embrace commercialisation as a means of translating research into practical, accessible, and sustainable forms of transformative societal impact. The focus is not on profit for profit’s sake, but on amplifying reach, ensuring sustainability, and creating value in society (including commercial value).

If you’re a SHAPE academic with a groundbreaking idea, we can help bridge the gap between your research and its real-world application. We have modified and expanded our internal processes to evaluate SHAPE ideas and turn them into SHAPE innovations. Whether through publishing, digital platforms, consulting or social entrepreneurship, we are ready to work with you to find the right commercialisation pathway for your SHAPE innovation.



**Downloadable resource from the SARIMA  
Community of Practice in SHAPE:**  
Guideline for Humanities, Arts and Social  
Science Innovation researchers in South Africa



# TTIS starts 2025 with a strong **FOCUS** on **INNOVATION**

The Technology Transfer and Innovation Support (TTIS) Office has started 2025 with a renewed commitment to helping researchers turn their ideas into real-world solutions. TTIS played a pivotal role in two significant events: the Research and Innovation (R&I) Induction Session and the Research and Innovation Colloquium.

New researchers were exposed to the various support systems through the R&I Induction Session, which was organised by the NWU's Research and Innovation portfolio. TTIS provided information on patents, licensing and commercialisation strategies, emphasising the importance of intellectual property (IP) protection.

The final session of the Research and Innovation Colloquium, which took place at the Sun City Convention Centre, was devoted to the topic of "Innovations for

shaping a sustainable tomorrow: aligning research to market needs", and featured an esteemed panel of experts:

- Ms Nontombi Maseko, Director of Innovation and Technology Policy and Strategy at the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the DTIC)
- Ms Jetane Charsley, Chief Director (Head) of the National Intellectual Property Management Office (NIPMO) at the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI)
- Dr Andrew Bailey, RTTP, acting director of Research Contracts and Innovation, University of Cape Town (UCT)
- Mr Duncan Raftesath, NWU Enterprises CEO

*Dr Andrew Bailey RTTP, Ms Jetane Charsley,  
Ms Nontombi Maseko, Mr Duncan Raftesath  
and Dr Janine Chantson*





# NWU TTIS EMPOWERS *agro-processors* AND EMERGING FARMERS

The Food Resilience Unit at the City of Johannesburg's Department of Social Development recently partnered with Technology Transfer and Innovation Support (TTIS) at the North-West University (NWU) to host an Intellectual Property (IP) Awareness Workshop. The workshop aimed to teach agro-processors and emerging farmers how to protect their innovations. Held in Johannesburg, the event brought these small businesses together with experts to discuss safeguarding innovations and gaining a competitive advantage through IP protection.

The workshop covered a range of topics, including the basics of IP, protecting IP in agricultural innovations, managing and strategising IP assets, managing IP in

collaborations, and grasping the resources and assistance available to small-scale farmers. Presentations by experts from the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ) provided small-scale farmers and agro-processors with the knowledge and insights necessary to manage and protect their intellectual property in a highly competitive environment.

Dr Mesuli Mbanjwa, the Commercialisation Manager at TTIS, gave an engaging presentation on managing IP in collaborations. He discussed how collaboration can foster innovation, reduce costs and open up new markets. He shared practical tips on clarifying ownership, protecting IP, negotiating shared value, and

drafting clear agreements. He emphasised the mutual benefits of shared risks and efforts, as well as the importance of having clear agreements in place regarding IP ownership, the duration of the collaboration, roles, cancellation terms, and benefit sharing. Attendees found the advice relevant and actionable.

Participants appreciated the comprehensive information provided and the opportunity to engage with industry experts. The collaboration between the City of Johannesburg, NWU TTIS, ARC, CIPC and UJ underscores a shared commitment to promoting innovation. It is a significant step in supporting agricultural entrepreneurs in their efforts to boost food security and economic growth in South Africa.



*Dr Mesuli Mbanjwa, delivering a presentation on managing IP in collaborations*



*Products showcased by emerging farmers and agro-processors*



# NWU PARTICIPATES IN WORLD'S LARGEST TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER GATHERING

Mr. Ntiyiso Shabangu, a Technology Transfer Specialist at the North-West University's (NWU) Technology Transfer and Innovation Support (TTIS) Office, represented the institution at the 2025 AUTM Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. This event is recognised as the world's largest and most influential gathering of technology transfer professionals, drawing participants from universities, research institutions, industry, and government sectors around the globe.

The 2025 meeting featured a dynamic programme of sessions focusing on intellectual property management, licensing, start-up development and innovation policy. Of particular significance was the strong emphasis placed on global collaboration and responsible licensing. Institutions from different continents shared practical strategies to ensure that

publicly funded research has an inclusive and sustainable impact.

Key themes included navigating the challenges of limited early-stage funding, aligning academic and commercial goals, and managing increasingly complex intellectual property landscapes. Through engaging workshops, panel discussions and networking sessions, the AUTM Annual Meeting offered attendees a valuable opportunity to learn from global best practice, build partnerships and consider the evolving role of technology transfer in meeting societal needs.

Mr. Shabangu's participation underscores NWU TTIS's commitment to fostering international collaboration, keeping abreast of global trends, and guaranteeing that the University's innovations continue to have a meaningful local and global impact.



**2025 AUTM ANNUAL MEETING**

#AUTM2025

*Mr. Ntiyiso Shabangu the institution at the 2025 AUTM Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C*

# NWU Technology Transfer and Innovation Support

## ENGAGES IN GLOBAL DIALOGUE

Dr Janine Chantson, Chief Director of Technology Transfer and Innovation Support (TTIS) at the North-West University (NWU), recently represented the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) and the Alliance of Technology Transfer Professionals (ATTP) at the prestigious annual conference of the Zhongguancun (ZGC) Forum in Beijing. The visit formed part of a knowledge exchange mission by ATTP, hosted by the Technology Transfer Professionals Association of China National Capital Region.

With the theme “New Quality Productive Forces and Global Science and Technology Cooperation”, the ZGC Forum is one of China’s premier platforms for international dialogue on innovation. This five-day event featured plenary sessions, a technology trade fair, and several parallel forums, with delegates attending from around the world.

ATTP chair Dr Alwin Wong delivered a keynote address, highlighting the diversity of global

technology transfer ecosystems. On 30 March, Dr Chantson participated in the Global Network for Technology Transfer Professionals forum, where she served as a panellist in a session focusing on strategies for cultivating a skilled technology transfer workforce.

The forum also explored academic-industry partnerships and strategies to enhance professional training systems. “Engaging directly with counterparts in Beijing was invaluable,” said Dr Chantson. “It offered real insight into a rapidly evolving technology transfer ecosystem and highlighted the importance of international collaboration.”

Outside of the conference, Dr Chantson participated in site visits to Beijing Information Science & Technology University, medical research institutes, and hospital-based technology transfer offices. She also held constructive discussions with regional associations on strengthening ties with ATTP and expanding RTTP accreditation efforts.



# NWU BRINGS MUSIC AND LEARNING TOGETHER FOR WORLD IP DAY

On 9 May 2025, the North-West University (NWU) held a lively event to celebrate World Intellectual Property Day (WIPD). The theme for this year's event was "IP and Music: Feel the Beat of IP". The event demonstrated how intellectual property (IP) protects music and supports its creators. The celebration was organised by Technology Transfer and Innovation Support (TTIS) at the NWU with the aim of informing students and staff about the importance of IP, particularly for creative works such as music.

The programme included talks by experts and fun musical performances by students. There was also a live show by NWU alumnus and Afro House star Bonolo Phiri, also known as Bonolo Bliz. She shared her story of making it in the music industry and explained how knowing her rights helped her succeed as an independent artist. Her talk was followed by a lively performance. Christiaan Steyn, an NWU alumnus and founder of STEYN IP, then explained why IP is important for musicians. He talked about how understanding copyright laws

helps artists protect their music and control their careers. Prof Janelize Morelli from the School of Music at the NWU spoke about how artists are beginning to incorporate artificial intelligence (AI) into their work. She emphasised the importance of being clear and honest about using AI and thinking carefully about ethics. She encouraged students to experiment with new ideas while respecting the rules.

Students also took part in the NWU Youth Video Competition. The winners received great prizes, and the audience got to vote for their favourite performers, which made the event fun and interactive.

The NWU WIPD celebration was a big success. It showed that protecting your ideas is just as important as creating them. With music, learning and creativity at its heart, the day reminded everyone how IP helps artists and the creative world to grow.



*Dr Janine Chantson, Prof Janelize Morelli, Ms Bonolo Phiri, Mr Christiaan Steyn & Dr Mesuli Mbanjwa*



*Winners of the NWU World IP Day 2025 Youth Video Competition*





# NWU Workshop Unpacks ETHICS and INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

North-West University (NWU) recently held an insightful workshop at its Mahikeng Campus, titled “Ethics and Indigenous Systems – An African Approach to Community Engagement and Ubuntu”. Coordinated by the Postgraduate and Research Support Office, the event brought together local and national experts to discuss how researchers can conduct their work in a manner that respects indigenous knowledge and African values.

The workshop was made possible through funding from the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) and was held in a hybrid format on 13 May 2025, allowing for both in-person and online participation.

The speakers discussed the importance of protecting indigenous knowledge and cultural practices, and of ensuring that research benefits the communities involved. There was a particular focus on Ubuntu, the African philosophy that reminds us that “I am because we are”. This approach fosters trust, respect and collaboration in research.

Participants discussed the ethical challenges encountered when researching communities where traditions and culture play a significant role. They also examined ways to protect traditional knowledge and prevent researchers from taking advantage of communities.

Dr Mesuli Mbanjwa, representing the Technology Transfer and Innovation Support (TTIS) Office,

shared his insights on conducting research in a responsible and ethical manner, including the protection of indigenous knowledge and IP rights, and ensuring mutual benefit. The other presenters were Dr George Sedupane, Mr Otsile Maditsi, Prof Simeon Albert Materechera (NWU IKS Centre) and Prof Lorette Jacobs (UNISA), who presented virtually.

The workshop forms part of NWU’s ongoing efforts to make research more inclusive and responsible by recognising and respecting indigenous systems and the individuals behind them.



*Dr George Sedupane, Mr Otsile Maditsi, Prof Simeon Albert Materechera (NWU IKS Centre), and Dr Mesuli Mbanjwa (NWU TTIS).*



# TTIS Participates in Teaching & Learning Conferences to Promote Research Impact

Technology Transfer and Innovation Support (TTIS) exhibited at the North-West University's (NWU's) Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Teaching and Learning Conference, held in Potchefstroom from 28 to 29 January 2025. This year's theme, "Harmonising Teaching and Learning: The synergy between AI, technology, assessment and future graduates," attracted a dynamic, multidisciplinary audience from across the higher education spectrum.

The conference provided TTIS with a valuable platform to showcase its role in fostering innovation, supporting the development of intellectual property, and transforming academic research into practical solutions, particularly in the area of educational technologies. It also offered TTIS an excellent opportunity to interact directly with delegates, participate in meaningful discussions and generate interest in the commercialisation of university innovations.

Through collaborative exchange and thought leadership, TTIS continues to champion the commercialisation of university-born innovations that shape the future of teaching and learning.



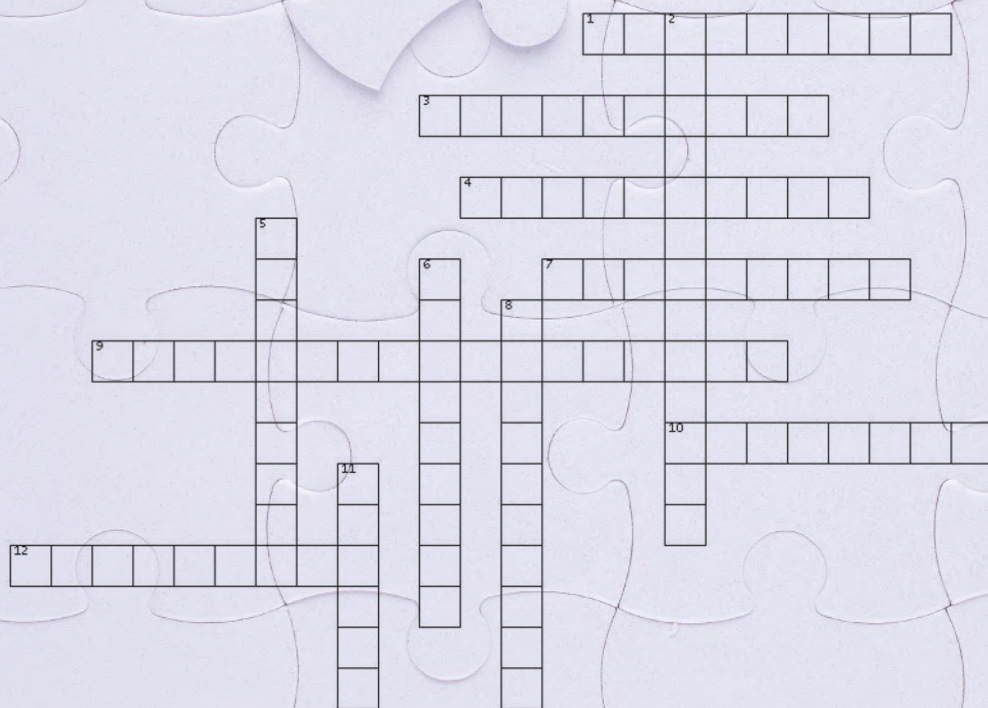
*Dr Mesuli Mbanjwa and Ms Charlotte Mashaba interacting with conference delegates*



*Ms Charlotte Mashaba & Mr Johann Coetzee at the TTIS exhibition stand*



# INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## ACROSS

1. Protection given to authors of "original works of authorship" like books, music, and films.
3. The act of creating a new method, idea, or product.
4. The transfer of IP ownership from one entity to another.
7. Payments made by a licensee to the IP owner in exchange for using the IP.
9. The process of bringing a new product or service to the market.
10. A person who creates a new device, method, or process.
12. Legal protection given to creators of literary, artistic, and musical works.

## DOWN

2. The quality of an invention that makes it eligible for a patent.
5. The granting of permission by the IP owner for someone else to use the IP.
6. Words, phrases, symbols, or designs that distinguish goods or services.
8. The act of revealing details about an invention, often the first step in the tech transfer process.
11. A form of protection granted for an invention, giving the inventor exclusive rights to the invention.



# MEET THE TEAM



*Dr Janine Chantson*



*Mr Johann Coetzee*



*Dr Mesuli Mbanjwa*



*Mrs Yolandé Bullock*



*Mr Hannes Malan*



*Ms Charlotte Mashaba*



*Mr Ntiyiso Shabangu*



*Mr Vukosi Mathale*



*Mrs Mari Berner*

## GET IN TOUCH



Visit Our Offices @ Building D1, 2nd Floor,  
Corner Hoffman & Borchard Street,  
Potchefstroom  
2531



Email: [TechTransfer@nwu.ac.za](mailto:TechTransfer@nwu.ac.za)



Tel: +27 18 299 4850

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